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ALFRED BINET

The death of Alfred Binet, which occurred on October 18th, deprives France of one of her foremost psychologists, and will be felt as a heavy loss far beyond the limits of his native country.

Binet was born in Nice, July 8, 1857. In 1871 he went to Paris, with the intention of studying law; soon, however, he came under the influence of Charcot, and turned his thoughts to medicine. About 1880, he decided definitely on a psychological career, and in 1892 was associated with Professor Beaunis in the direction of the laboratory of physiological psychology at the Sorbonne. In 1895, on the retirement of Professor Beaunis, he was given sole charge of the laboratory.

Binet was a prolific writer, with a typically French predilection for the immature, the exceptional, the abnormal, in psychology, and with strong practical interests. His principal works are *La psychologie du raisonnement: Recherches expérimentales par l'hypnotisme* (1886); *Le magnétisme animal*, in collaboration with Ch. Féré (1886); *La perception extérieure*, a memoir crowned by the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences (1887); *Études de psychologie expérimentale* (Fetichism in Love, The Psychic Life of Micro-organisms, The Intensity of Mental Images, The Hypnotic Problem, Note on Hysterical Writing: 1888); *Les altérations de la personnalité* (1892); *On Double Consciousness; Experimental Psychological Studies* (1894); *Introduction à la psychologie expérimentale*, with Philippe, Courtier and V. Henri (1894); *Psychologie des grands calculateurs et joueurs d'échecs* (1894); *La fatigue intellectuelle*, with V. Henri (1898); *La suggestibilité* (1900); *L'étude expérimentale de l'intelligence* (1903); *L'âme et le corps* (1905); *Les révélations de l'écriture d'après un contrôle scientifique* (1906); *Les enfants anormaux*, with Simon (1907); *Les idées sur les enfants* (1909). Several of these books have been translated into English, and one at least into German. Binet also published a long list of articles in various magazines, notably in *Mind*, the *Monist*, the *Revue philosophique*, and the *Revue scientifique*. For a year or two he issued, in collaboration with Beaunis, *Bulletins* from the Sorbonne laboratory. In 1895 he began the publication, with Beaunis, of the *Année psychologique*; in 1897 Beaunis resigned the responsible editorship, and the annual has since been carried on by Binet, with the assistance of a changing staff of collaborators. Much of his

work upon applied psychology is contained in these seventeen volumes, and in 1908 Binet formally devoted the *Année* to the study of practical and social questions. In 1897 he founded, with V. Henri, the short-lived but admirably useful *Intermédiaire des biologistes*.

Binet's psychological acumen is best shown, perhaps, in the *Etude expérimentale de l'intelligence*, a study of the intellectual processes of his two little daughters, which he undertook without knowledge of contemporary German work, and which led him to results akin to those obtained by the Würzburg school. On the practical side, he is highly esteemed for the series of mental tests, the first draught of which he published in collaboration with Th. Simon, in 1905. Binet had a dislike of system, and his critical papers are apt to be records of personal impression, set down without regard for perspective. His style tended to prolixity; no doubt, the demands of the *Année* were heavy, and he was often obliged to write when he would have preferred to be silent. He had a large measure of originality and true psychological insight, and he takes rank with the leading psychologists of his generation.
